4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

CHAPTER X.

ALBANIAN WOMEN: THEIR CULTURE-BELIEFS.

779 THOUGH speaking the same language, observing the same customs, and cherishing the same traditions and aspirations, the Albanians, as may have been seen from the foregoing chapter, are, in matters of religious belief, divided by three Creeds, the Moslem, Orthodox Greek, and Roman Catholic. The Moslems constitute about one-half of the population, and of the remaining half the majority follow the rites of the Eastern Church.

●797 175 After the loss of their independence the Albanians began by degrees to abandon the faith of their forefathers for that of their conquerors. Islam, however, made but slow progress among them until towards the close of the sixteenth century, when the Porte promulgated a law assuring the possession of their property to those Albanian families who would bring up one of their sons in the Moslem faith. A Tosk proverb [538] says, "Where the sword is, there is the faith;" and the advantages which a nation of mercenary soldiers could not fail to find in belonging to the religion of the dominant race, soon made conversion so general that the populations of whole villages, towns, and even districts would simultaneously apostatise to Islam. Wholesale perversions, such as these, have

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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not been unfrequent even in the present century, and the prevailing tendency on the part of the highlanders to become Moslems, and of the Orthodox Christian agriculturists to emigrate to Greece and elsewhere, makes it probable that in course of time the country may become entirely Moslem.

Like the Kūrds, however, the Moslem Albanians have among the Turks the reputation of being but indifferent followers of the Prophet, and the same opinion is entertained by their Greek neighbours of the Albanians who call themselves members of the Orthodox Church. Christian men marry Moslem women, and *vice versâ*; the sons are brought up in the faith of Mohammed, and the daughters in that of Christ; Moslems revere the Virgin Mary and the Christian saints, and make pilgrimages to their shrines; Christians reciprocally resort to the tombs of Moslem saints for the cure of ailments or in fulfilment of vows; while Christians and Moslems alike mingle with their culture-beliefs, ancient rites and superstitious usages, which both creeds have proved powerless to eradicate. The Miridites and some tribes of Ghegs on the coast adopted the Roman Catholic creed about the end of the last century, and follow the Latin rite with some Oriental differences, as, for instance, the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds to the laity.

The celebration of the Festival of Our Lady of Skodra (or Scutari), which is held on the anniversary of the departure of her image from the Latin church in that town, and in which Christians and Moslems participate, is a striking example of the half-hearted belief of the Skipetars. The story goes that, many years

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known in European history by his Turkish name of Iskander Bey Scanderbeg—who successfully revolted against Turkey and maintained Albanian independence for twenty-five years, defeating the Turks in thirteen great battles and innumerable small ones. After his death in 1467 some of the chiefs of the central mountain tribes, exhausted by a quarter century of war and confronting fresh Turkish armies, purchased their actual independence by a verbal submission and became nominally Mohammedan. When the Bechtaski sect—which may roughly be said to bear the relation to Islam that the Methodist bears to the Church of Rome—rose in Turkey, it found its most fertile ground among these Mohammedan Albanians. The northern mountain tribes have always remained Roman Catholic, and southern Albania Greek Catholic.

None of these creeds, however, have affected national unity—Albania is the only Balkan country in which religion and nationality are not synonymous—and all of them are rooted shallowly above the old religion of Albanians, which is the formless belief in a Great Unknown from which sprang the gods and mythology of ancient Greece. In southern Albania you will still hear the people taking oath *per keie djelle eghe per kete hene* (by the power of the sun and the moon). You will still hear them calling upon Zeus—Zaa or Zee, the Voice—and upon Athena—E Thana, The Intelligence. In the north, the Catholic mountaineer greets the rising sun with the sign

[See cat. 795, pp. [293] 292-293 -- Analyst]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
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I Go a-Missionising

it might be renewed. I had a most uncomfortable night in a bedroom with three beds, of which two were occupied by Albanians who slept in their clothes and snored. The third bed I shared with a host of predatory creatures who seemed to have been fasting for months in anticipation of my arrival. At five the next morning, when I had sunk from sheer exhaustion into a fitful slumber, I was aroused by the other two men getting up, and saw my late antagonists, bloated and swollen with their feast, slowly climbing the wall. Even at eight there were still a few stragglers toiling painfully homewards—the rearguard of the victorious army.

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The Missionary School is a private philanthropic concern, not as yet under the U.S. Missionary Board. It has been kept going, in the face of many difficulties, practically continuously since 1908. The Greeks, who were at that time in power, knowing that their treatment of the Albanian people was not likely to increase their prestige in either Great Britain or America, had no desire that an American should be a witness of it, and threw every possible obstacle in the way of the establishment of the school. It speaks highly for Mr. Kennedy's persistence that in spite of this he succeeded in his endeavour. The school is strictly non-sectarian and at the present time is attended by a large number of scholars, both Christian and Mohammedan.

On the afternoon of the Sunday which I spent at Koritza we went out a-missionising. A conveyance of the buggy type took us to a village in the plain which offered I suppose, a promising field. The journey was not speedy,

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Converting the Imaum

Permission was thereupon[1] asked to hold a " meeting ". But at this there was some hesitation, since the head-man himself was away and in his absence no one cared to accept the responsibility of granting such permission. Failing the meeting, we now asked to be allowed to see the village school and were at once taken to a little room adjoining the mosque, wherein sat a dozen boys in fezzes of every conceivable shape and pattern receiving instruction from a young Albanian school-teacher. The lesson was suspended and we were given seats, the boys staring at us meanwhile with interest and curiosity. 797

After some general conversation—which, of course, I was unable to follow, as it was in Albanian—the missionary produced a bundle of leaflets and having distributed them began what was, I imagine, a little sermon or homily. To this the imaum, the teacher, and the scholars listened attentively, the imaum nodding his head at every remark with which he found himself in agreement. The boys then sang to us—a horrible noise—and Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy replied with a duet from the hymn-book. This ended the proceedings.

I admired the missionary's tactful determination, but I admired the tolerance of the imaum still more. What English parson would permit a Mohammedan priest to interrupt the village school with a sermon and a distribution of Mohammedan tracts ?

Later that day I had another object-lesson of the same kind. We visited a monastery belonging to the Dervish sect of the Mohammedans, an influential body who owned

[1] [by American missionary of imaum in village near Koritza--- Analyst]

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797 most of the surrounding land. The head of the fraternity received us in an upper room furnished in Turkish fashion with carpets, divans, and cushions. He was a big man with a great brown beard, a prominent nose, and a huge white hat, and he sat cross-legged in the Oriental way. After he had entertained us with coffee, cigarettes, and conversation, the harmonium was carried upstairs and deposited in the middle of the room—an astonishing anachronism in that atmosphere of Omar Khayyam—and hymns were sung to him for the good of his soul. Leaflets were left, as if by accident, on the divan, as well as a hymn-book—all printed in Albanian—and so a little more of "the Lord's work" was accomplished. But I wished I could see into the dervish's mind and read what he really thought of it all. And I wondered what would happen if he were to turn the tables and attempt a little missionary work on his own account. The situation would have been unusual, and might have proved amusing.

The translation of the Bible into a somewhat limited language like Albanian has its pitfalls. In one of Mr. Kennedy's tracts the quotation "Blessed are the poor in spirit" occurred. This, unfortunately, had been rendered by the Albanian translator, and, more unluckily still, had been printed by the printer, as "Blessed are the weak-minded"!

538 The dervish, in answer to a question I put to him through Mr. Kennedy, said that there was no Albanian literature, and that such poetry and legend as there was had survived only through being handed down orally. This, he explained,

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178 795 [55] turi and Nikaj, the men adopt 2 sets of names, Moslem and Christian, and employ the former while traveling to avoid trouble. They get used to these names and in many cases use them at home. In Hoti, the *bairaktar* once led his men against the invading Serbs, with the help of the Turkish government. In gratitude for his brave and successful conduct the Turks granted him special privileges, and he went over, with his family, to Islam. The rest of the *bairak* is still mostly Catholic, but the tendency in such a case is for the others to follow the leader. In Lura, where mixed families are found, the Catholics have given up keeping pigs so as not to offend the Moslems, and celebrate Moslem festivals as well as Christian ones, to avoid trouble. Very rarely a Mirdite will marry a Moslem woman from Mati, but when he does she becomes Catholic.

797 144 When the Turks introduced Islam, all Ghegs were Catholics. Almost exclusively, the change has been in the Moslem direction. Hence we may assume that almost none of the present-day Catholics bear genetic elements brought in from outside the region by the Turks or their followers, while the same is not necessarily true of the Moslem Ghegs. *Bairak* by *bairak* and tribe by tribe, as conversion progressed, the line between the 2 religions has remained, by and large, a marital barrier. During the whole period of the Turkish rule, Catholics have furthermore been able to travel much less widely than Moslems, with resultant genetic implications.

771 In Albania one frequently hears the remark that "the Albanians are not very religious." This is usually said with pride, for the presence of 3 religions in so small a country is deemed a dangerous impediment to political unity. In one sense, the remark is quite true. Few Albanians are religious fanatics; few of them worry about their spiritual salvation. Most of the Catholics go to church with some regularity, and most of the Moslems keep Ramadan. However, their ancient way of life provides most of the ritual which they need to tide them over emotional crises, so that church and mosque are in many ways superfluous. A 771 596 man's first loyalty is to his "blood," that is, his extended family. He spends much of his time, effort, and material goods keeping the family together and avenging any deed which has up-

175 road must have been much less patronized, for there was no one either to keep it up or guard it. Furthermore, what goods would come out of Moesia and Dacia would go to Byzantium rather than to Rome. In the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., the Goths over-ran parts of eastern Ghegnia, and traditions about them remain in the tribe of Luma, where some of these northerners may have settled. In A.D. 535, Justinian defeated them and claimed Ghegnia for the Eastern Empire.

175 797 It was probably just at the period when the traffic over the Puka road was at its height, about the 4th century of the Christian era, that the tribesmen on either side of it may have been first converted to Christianity. Constantine himself, the first Christian emperor, may have passed through Ghegnia, for he was a Dardanian, a native of Niš. Our first record of Christian establishments in the mountains is dated A.D. 877[13] when there was already a bishop at Pulati, and by the 14th century we hear of 2 bishoprics, Pulatenses Majores and Pulatenses Minores, which were united in 1520. Another bishopric had its seat in the village of Drivasto (Drishti), in Postripa.[14]

175 Early in the 6th century the southern Slavs invaded the Balkans. A century later some of them moved westward from the Plain of Kossovo through the Drin Gates into Gheg territory, probably following the old Roman road. Their arrival at the Adriatic is still memorialized by the Slavic name of the tribe Zadrima, and a number of other place names. For 700 years the Serbian kings maintained a nominal rule over this mountain country. Now and then they disturbed the Catholic Albanian population, as in 1335, when the Tzar Dushan gave to the Orthodox monastery of Dechani[15] the land of the village of Summa, on the right bank of the Kiri in the Pulati bishopric, along with neighboring Albanian districts, and a number of bondsmen whose names read very much like those on our measurement blanks. Between 1372 and 1427, "Helena, widow of Stefan Dushan, and her son, Urosh [sic], 'vexed most bitterly the Catholics, and spoiled

1 1 [See p. 43a. Analyst]

[13] Durham, 1928, pp. 24–25, 28.

[14] Farlati, 1817, pp. ix–xiv, tells the story of these Albanian Bishoprics; see also Šufflay, 1916, p. 188.

175 them of their goods, and reduced them to extreme poverty.' "[16]

During the Slavic period it is likely that the invaders had some effect upon the genetic composition of the mountain people, for Slavic names, such as Orosh, are common enough in Ghegnia, the Slavs certainly had access to much of the country, and Slavic speech had a considerable effect on the Albanian vocabulary. This was not, however, as important an invasion from the standpoint of biological interest as others that followed.

During the brief period between the end of the Old Serbian Empire and the time of the Turks, the Ghegs were left alone. The Turks began their invasion of Albania at the end of the 14th century, after the battle of Kossovo, in 1389. They met in battle the formidable Scanderbeg[17] (George Castrioti), the most famous of all Ghegs. He and his successors held them off from his fortress at Kruja (or Croya) until after 1479, the date of the fall of Scutari. The Turks never won control of all the highlands. Indeed, all of Mirdita and Dukagin, and parts of other tribes, remained Catholic throughout the Turkish period. Remaining Catholic meant that they were able to keep their country free of Turks. It also [553] meant that they usually stayed at home. However, many of the Christians adopted Moslem names which they used when they left their tribal territory to visit market towns, and this custom was still going on in 1929.

175 All of the Ghegs who were converted to 797 Islam did not change their faith through necessity. Many of them saw solid advantages in making the shift. A Moslem could carry a gun openly anywhere, and could shoot Christians at will, for they were outlaws. He could travel in Turkish territory without having to worry about being caught, and he could obtain many economic advantages over his Christian relatives, whose marital arrangements, unlike his own, produced a religious conflict. He could join the Turkish army, and rise to high rank; many Turkish generals were Albanians. Other Albanians became high court officials. One of

[16] Durham, 1928, p. 29.
[17] Durham, 1928, pp. 24–25
[17] See Fan Noli, 1947.

175 797 them founded the royal house of present-day Egypt. The Turks appreciated their Albanian subjects and favored them over many others. That is one reason why three-fourths of Albanians are still Moslem, and why Albania remained so long a part of the Turkish Empire.

175 177 Although the Turks probably did not add much genetically to the Gheg population, they did introduce some economic changes which may have had some effect on it. It was through the Turks that New World plants reached the Balkans, although in some places not before 1850. They added maize, haricot beans, and tobacco to the list of plants which would grow in the valleys and on the mountain slopes. Maize and haricot beans gave them new foodstuffs, but it is questionable if they yield more calories per acre than the earlier crops—small grains and broad-beans. Tobacco gave the mountaineers a new habit and a new need, and also a cash crop. On the debit side of the ledger, with their religion the Turks produced a prohibition against pork, ~~and de-~~ prived their converts of an important food source.

Besides these agricultural and dietary changes the Turks introduced *hans*, or inns, along the more traveled roads in Moslem territory. Some of these *hans* probably occupy the same locations as Roman hostels. The professions of *hanji* (innkeeper), and *kiraji* (renter of horses) seem to have been Turkish innovations. In Turkish times, many Albanians [166] migrated to other countries; tens of thousands went to the Plain of Kossovo, apparently from the Gheg country, and many others to Greece, where there are still Albanian-speaking districts in Attica and the Peloponnesus. Many thousands entered the Turkish army, and other government services. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Christian Albanians, fleeing the Turks, settled in Italy and Sicily, where their descendants still maintain their ethnic identity.

Probably the most important single introduction of the Turks, however, was firearms. Gunsmiths in the market towns found the mountaineers eager to obtain the new weapons with which they could not only defend their home valleys from invaders, but also work off

[10] See Jireček, 1916, pp. 63–93

1/1 [see cat 116, pp. 20b-21a.. Analyst]